

Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer: BTK

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

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Abstract

Serial killers began to gain the public's interest as early as the 1800s. Today, it is estimated that there are between twenty-five to fifty serial killers in America at any given time. The psychology of a serial killer is so very different from ours, which makes them so interesting. I have looked at the lives of the average serial killer and the characteristics they have in common. I have analyzed where they come from and even their DNA to determine what forms a serial killer. Then, I tell the story of the BTK Killer, Dennis Rader. Dennis Rader began killing women in 1974 and was arrested for his murders in 2005. I will analyze his life and determine the factors that I believe formed him into the serial killer he became.

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Violent crime has become a normal part of our lives. No matter where we live or what kind of home we have grown up in, violent crime surrounds us. As people, watching the news and seeing the amount of violent crime every night has desensitized us. However, we continue to feel extreme curiosity and disgust towards a special kind of crime, serial murder. Serial killers are some of the most mysterious people society has ever come across. They have the ability to instill fear in everyone, regardless of who we are or where we are. Serial killers from all over the country, and even the world, have been observed and studied in order to determine why serial killers do what they do. What makes them so different from us?

There are many characteristics of serial killers that begin to show when they are children and continue, even intensifying, into adulthood. I will discuss these characteristics, as well as describing the specific kind of serial killer we are evaluating within this paper, lust murderers. One very big aspect of serial killers is the aggression they display. We will consider normal aggression levels and then why certain people, who eventually grow up to be killers have an abnormal response to aggression. By taking into consideration previous research, we have the ability to evaluate specific categories of killers as well as the murders themselves. Depending on the murder scene and how the murder is committed, we are able to connect those to the overall personality of the killer.

Finally, we can look into DNA and how certain characteristics may actually be inherited and not completely defined by the environment around the killers. After looking at the basics of all these components, we will be looking at the stories of one famous serial killer, Dennis Rader (BTK Killer). By consider his story, we will be able to analyze how his crimes and his upbringing should have shown that he would become a killer later in life. By the end, I hope that we can see the true mind of a serial killer.

Homicide has always gripped the world as a horrible crime. However, we are used to the homicides usually being solved. We rely on our law enforcement to find the person who does a crime so horrible that a life is taken. Since 1960, the solution rate for homicides has declined from over 90% to around 76% in 1983 (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 5) and it continued the decline to 64% in 2012. We have increasingly failed to solve murders in our nation. In 1988, there were 16 different countries surveyed and it was found that the United States had the highest rates of murder, assault and sexual assault (Steen, 1996, pg. 217). This high rate of violence was a serious issue in 1988 and continues to be an issue today.

In 2013, the United States had the rate of homicide of 4.5 people out of 100,000, whereas the rate for Canada was 1.44 people out of 100,000. The fact that the United States is so much more violent than Canada implies that violence cannot be explained solely by genetics (Steen, 1996, pg. 219). The rate of recidivism in the jail and prison population for violent crime is extremely high. The fact that someone commits a crime and is imprisoned for it makes him more likely to commit another crime after he is released. This is important to understand because it shows that the high crime rate does not mean that there is an increasing number of criminals in the population. However, based on the increase in technology available to investigation of violent crimes, it would be fair to assume that the decrease in the solution rate for homicide can be attributed to the character of the contemporary killers more so than the ability of the investigators (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 5). This means that killers today have evolved and know how to commit murder more so than the investigators just not being able to catch them.

Since we will be discussing serial killers throughout this essay, it is important to understand the true definition of a serial killer and the difference between a serial killer and a mass murderer. Mass murderers tend to kill a number of people in one place at a single time;

however, serial killers will murder a number of people over a long period of time (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 9). It would seem criminologists claim that serial killers were most likely good people originally, but eventually were led astray (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 86). Based on characteristics from their childhood as well as how they grew up, this is probably a good assumption about serial killers.

Characteristics are given in order to try and describe what appear to be common variables among serial killers (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 14). It is important to note that just because there happen to be many characteristics, these are not what cause someone to kill. Causes explain why certain behaviors occur and they are not necessarily related to the characteristics. Most serial killers are white, 25-34 years old, intelligent or "street smart," charming and even charismatic. Many of them are psychopathic to some extent and they usually focus on one type of victim. They will usually kill with "hands on" weapons, such as knives, rope, or their bare hands. Many serial killers are born out of wedlock and are physically, sexually or emotionally abused as children. As they grow older, they tend to abuse alcohol or other drugs, which increases their sadistic thoughts and behaviors (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 15). Other characteristics of a serial killer include weakness, vanity and self-delusion (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 186). Weakness would be defined as more mental than physical. Vanity and self-delusion, however, go hand-in-hand when we discuss serial killers. They tend to have an exaggerated view of themselves and their power. They often have an irrational sense of self-pity that can produce an explosion of violence (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 276). If they have the feeling that someone else views them as inferior, they will internalize those feelings and they will backfire into violence.

Most of the time, serial killers will show early signs of aggressive behavior by acting out towards animals in a violent manner (Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1998, pg. 38). They will

usually torture and even kill animals in the neighborhood as well as family pets. Along with cruelty to animals, enuresis (bed wetting) past the age of 12, arson, and cruelty to other people are considered behaviors most frequently seen as indicative of future violence (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 41). Self-victimizing behavior, such as masochism, is also highly prevalent in serial killers as children, as well as later on in life (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 40).

Serial killers are usually of average or above average intelligence. Very few have IQ scores below average. A majority of their fathers worked in unskilled jobs and the killers would generally describe their families as being self-sufficient based on income (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 16). However, despite their intelligence levels along with their potential in many areas, their academic, employment and military performance are usually pitiable (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 30). They very rarely have a desire to truly apply themselves to anything that would contribute to society. Work does not usually come easily to them, nor does social interaction.

There has been a lot of evidence of both psychological and physical abuse in the histories of serial killers (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 23). Many member of serial killer's immediate and extended family have histories of psychiatric disorders. These are often combined with problems involving aggression (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 17). These could include quickness to anger along with physical abuse in the home. Quite a few serial killers tend to have had psychiatric disturbances and high amounts of aggression as children (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 18). This could be a result of growing up in a home where aggression is considered the norm and they are just following along with what they know. There is a potential for psychological damage, which could result from a deprived childhood, and this often displays itself in many aggressive behaviors. These aggressive behaviors could include rebelliousness towards authority, theft, obstinate lying, acts of willful destruction, arson, and cruelty to animals and other children

(Wilson & Seaman, pg. 41). This is their way of acting out and looking for attention from those around them. It also gives them the ability to demonstrate on the outside how they are feeling on the inside. Because this is how they show their feelings, special attention should be paid to the psychological reactions of the children experiencing direct and indirect childhood trauma. In this sense, direct trauma refers to physical and sexual abuse, while indirect trauma refers to witnessing or observing disturbing interactive experiences around them (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 22). These reactions usually take place during child-play, which will be discussed in depth and the role it plays identified later in this paper.

The relationship between sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence and sexual problems in adults shows that those who have been sexually abused are more likely to report sexual conflicts, sexual dysfunction, and sexual incompetence (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 25). Based on this connection, it makes sense that many killers have admitted to being sexually incompetent as adults, especially if they have been sexually abused themselves (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 42). There is usually a history of sexual problems and violent experiences in childhood and adolescence, along with a dominant sexual fantasy life (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 24). To demonstrate this, The FBI conducted a study of incarcerated sex murderers: 43% were found to have been sexually abused as children, 32% during their teen years and 37% over the age of 18 (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 42). This shows that a majority of killers do not have to be sexually abused to kill later in life, but it is definitely a factor that seems to be very prominent among them.

Another important find from that study is that sexually stressful situations were present for 19 of the offenders. These situations could include negative parental reactions to masturbation, verbal assaults on the gender identity of the male, and/or observing the adolescent

male engaging in homosexual activity with peers (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 25). This could mean to the child that certain sexual relations are inappropriate and that they do not have the support of their parents that sex is a relatively normal part of life. It could also teach them to despise the person who told them that the good feelings they get from their sexual expressions are bad. This becomes a pivotal moment for them in their life, and they continue to crave these feelings. A very large number of sexual murderers are highly sexed in childhood and have peeped through bathroom keyholes on females undressing, or they have initiated sexual games with the girls at school, sometimes even against the females' will (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 147). These are definitely red flags when it comes to behavior from a school child, especially if he is involving other children and victimizing them.

Because of the sexual issues many of the killers have in their adult lives, there is a strong reliance on visual sexual stimuli as well as seeking out ways to relieve their sexual urges. The most popular forms of this include pornography, compulsive masturbation, fetishism, and voyeurism. However, bondage during sex, indecent exposure, bestiality, making obscene phone calls, rubbing against others, and cross-dressing are also used to meet these needs. Along with that, the relationship between sexual abuse in a childhood and adolescence and sexual activities indicates that those sexually abused are more likely to engage in the stimuli listed above. Because of the incompetence they most likely have, the adult sexual performance of murderers often remains highly visual and autoerotic, instead of interacting in a sexual manner with other willing partners (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 25).

Serial killers are almost always found to have experienced environmental problems in their childhoods. These problems could be that they come from homes with divorced parents or they come from homes with a weak or absent father figure (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 40). There is

usually a high degree of instability in the family, along with a hostile or poor relationship with the father figure, if they have one, along with physical and sexual abuse in childhood and teenage years (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 147). Based on the evidence found by the FBI, half the offenders' families had members with criminal histories. A little under half of the reported cases of the criminal activity involved sexual misbehavior among other family members (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 18).

Some studies have tried to argue for a relationship between crime and hypoglycemia, brain wave abnormalities, nutritional deficiencies, and other physical conditions, but these have not been proven to be accurate by any means (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 115). As previously stated, characteristics and events that have happened to these people are just factors in their lives, not necessarily the cause of future murders.

Starting in childhood, fantasies begin which is one of the most important pieces of a serial killer's life. The role of fantasy in serial murder is of prime importance (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 40). Fantasies are incredibly prominent for many serial killers and the fantasies usually begin as children, and gradually get more intense and vivid as they age. Over time they include their experiences they have throughout life. Their urges tend to get more intense as they get older which, in turn, makes the fantasies more intense in the content.

When potential serial killers experience poor sexual experience or performance, they usually compensate with fantasies before they actually begin killing, where all the factors of the experience can be controlled (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 30). Control is a huge need and issue for many killers. They have a desire to control what happens and turn their fantasies into real life occurrences.

As adolescents, instead of developing age appropriate interests and getting involved with males their own age, they retreat into their own sexually violent fantasy worlds (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 28). This fantasy is probably one of the most important elements of their lives. They thrive on the idea of fulfilling a fantasy at some point in their lives.

In order to observe early demonstrations of the killers' fantasy development, we can look into child's play (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 35). Watching a child play with dolls or with other children in a "house" kind of game can show a lot about how they live and their thoughts. If a child is forcing the other children to do what he wants or is trying to force the other children to engage in sexual contact, an observer should be able to notice the issues that these children have. Ongoing research shows that some serial killers begin working on their violent fantasies as early as seven or eight years of age. These fantasies will continue to develop through adolescence well into adulthood (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 40).

All children have fantasies; however, childhood fantasies are usually positive and encouraging learning through repetitive thinking and preparation for actions (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 35). Obviously, the young killers do not have these normal fantasies. Theirs are negative as well as sadistic in nature. Sadistic acts and fantasies are actually linked, while fantasy is what would be considered the underlying cause that drives the behavior of these killers (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 33).

There is usually a high degree of selfishness in the fantasies and play of children who later become serial killers. They will incorporate other children and family members as extensions of their fantasy world (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 36). If we can assume that these children are having violent fantasies and incorporating their families, this would suggest that they have a lot of anger and hatred towards them as well. Several boys at age five or six that

have been described as having a strong interest in and attraction to high heels, female underwear. These interests will intensify as the children get older, and they play a very significant part in their fantasy (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 37). The interests they have with high heels and underwear most likely goes along with incorporating their mother figure in their fantasy and it may suggest a sense of attraction.

The child's dominant thinking and play patterns are very aggressive and violent all through their childhood and into adulthood (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 39). As adults, murderers will incorporate their early remembered acts of play into their murders of adults. A good example of this would be pulling off Barbie heads as a child and then decapitating women as an adult (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 41). We can see how incredibly important these fantasies are to these killers. They stay in their minds until they have the ability to act them out, and even then the fantasy may not work out the way it was originally planned, which is why the killers continue to act out these fantasies through murder until they are just right.

Murderers who reported childhood sexual abuse said they began to experience rape fantasies at an earlier age than did those who did not report the abuse. These reporters of abuse were convicted murderers who discussed their abuse with psychologists and criminologists and the age the fantasies began was around 11 years old versus 15 years old (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 43). However, in some situations, fantasies that consist of rape could start anywhere from five years old all the way up to 25 (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 42).

As mentioned earlier, pornography tends to play a significant role in their lives because of their sexual incompetence. Pornography is also seen by analysts to be a factor which fuels a serial killer's violent fantasy, especially pornography containing bondage (Wilson & Seaman,

pg. 43). However, it is extremely important to note that pornography may fuel these fantasies but is never the cause for murder.

These fantasies that result from pornography are also very important when it comes to selecting a victim. In most cases, the victim is selected because she strikes the killer as the type of victim within their fantasy (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 155).

With the evolution and intensification of fantasies, violence and killing become natural and even justified acts in the lives of serial killers. They eventually begin to commit the acts, and it becomes their new norm (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 39). Fantasies could technically be considered the first stepping-stone to a killer's committing murder.

Aggression is present in all of us. We all feel upset and we respond with varying degrees of aggression. Aggression is an active response that is aimed at punishing a person who we feel has wronged us (Buss, 1961, pg. 1). There are two major reinforcements of aggression. One is the stimulus of the victim suffering injury or being in pain, and the other is the stimulus of extrinsic rewards. The killer usually enjoys watching his victim suffer and gets joy from being able to control how the victim feels. Angry aggression is usually reinforced by the victim's pain for most serial killers (Buss, 1961, pg. 2). Normal aggression is used in self-defense against a real enemy. The normal person is not easily provoked and has the ability to wait until the other person is vulnerable before attacking. The normal person views aggression as a necessary but unpleasant task (Buss, 1961, pg. 210). This would be how most of us see aggression and the only time we would probably ever use our aggression against someone else.

There are two different kinds of serial killers who utilize aggression, the neurotic and the psychotic. This is a way psychologists categorize serial killers based on how they utilize aggression. Neurosis is a conflict between ego and sexuality (Buss, 1961, pg. 213). A neurotic

uses aggression without discrimination and any slight provocation may produce massive aggression. If the victim retaliates, the killer usually experiences masochistic satisfaction and it is seen as a sado-masochistic game. The neurotic often feels rejected and frustrated and is likely to be more hostile than most people (Buss, 1961, pg. 210). Sexually motivated serial killers would usually fall in the neurotic category.

Psychosis, on the other hand, is believed to be the result of a conflict between the ego and aggression. Within psychosis, there are two psychotic groups that manifest themselves in aggression and hostility. Aggression would be defined as the readiness to attack someone, whereas hostility is the carrying out of the aggression. These are manic-depressives and paranoids (Buss, 1961, pg. 213). Manic-depressives are usually aggressive towards themselves or the people closest to them, like parents and siblings. However, all paranoids have delusions. Only a few paranoids have hostility involved with their delusional symptoms though. They will usually deny they are hostile even if they are. In the mind of a paranoid, the paranoid is simply an innocent victim of someone else's cruelty. They also believe that those around them hate them and are against them; they usually have the mentality of themselves against the rest of the world. If they attack someone, it is out of self-defense in their minds (Buss, 1961, pg. 216).

When it comes to expressing aggression, children tend to be more direct and physical than adults. Examples of physical aggression from children include annoying, teasing and being meddlesome, hitting, competing for positions of power with other children, threatening gestures, taking or damaging property of the other children, pessimism, and pushing, pulling, or holding other children (Buss, 1961, pg. 267). Some examples of verbal aggression in children would be commanding or demanding other children, tempting a child to hit another child, refusing to obey directions, shifting blame from themselves, claiming possession of items that do not belong to

them, and threatening other children (Buss, 1961, pg. 268). Physical aggression usually starts relatively early in life, around school age, and increases steadily as the child acquires greater control over motility and a greater range of attacking actions (Buss, 1961, pg. 281). Therefore, it should be visible by the time they reach their teenage years how aggressive they are or have the potential to be.

Children have the ability to use aggressive behavior as a means of gaining status, material rewards or coping with the fear of victimization (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 142). Most children have a much simpler way of seeing aggression. They use it when it is going to give them something in return rather than just because they can. The aggression of children in schools and with peers tends to increase in frequency until adolescence. Aggression in the home against parents and siblings, on the other hand, tends to decrease until adolescence. Once adolescence hits, the level of aggression makes a significant increase within the home (Buss, 1961, pg. 282).

The reason for the child continuing and even increasing aggression can be found in the inappropriate use of discipline by the family when teaching the child to control the aggressive behaviors (Buss, 1961, pg. 285). Most killers have actually reported discipline as unfair, hostile, inconsistent and even abusive (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 22).

There are nine types of aggression seen in problem children: from prolonged infancy, as attention getting, as a release of organic tension, as the acting out of a neurosis, from maturity fantasies, from effeminacy, defective aggression, oral aggression, and from hostility. However, for our purposes, I have only going to touch on the acting out of a neurosis and hostility.

Aggression as the acting out of a neurosis is when the child's hatred is placed upon someone who they identify with and they tend to show it. This usually occurs through sadism and masochism. Aggression from hostility usually occurs in disturbed children when they act out

their sadistic impulses. These children tend to be the most resistant to change. They manifest at least four out of seven of the following features: repeated absence from home or school, stealing or persistent lying, cruelty or teasing or bullying other children, disobedience or rebelliousness of authority, noticeable impatience or distractibility, vicious destruction, and severe tantrums when they are crossed (Buss, 1961, pgs. 293-295).

It has been noticed that the level of aggressiveness in all children tends to directly correlate with that of their parents (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 69). If the children see that their parents are also aggressive and do not bother correcting the behavior, the children imitate the aggression they utilize as being completely normal. Parents usually have a defined range of tolerance to aggression. This defined range usually is reflective of what they grew up with and their parents' tolerance. Families that have aggressive children where the parents punish the children for their use of violence are usually considered to have poor communication, weak organization and a lack of family structure (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 105). If the parents do not necessarily disapprove of aggression, then the parents are more than likely to ignore the aggression that is being shown by the child (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 106). However, ignoring it could also mean that the parents do not necessarily approve of the aggression. As mentioned earlier, sometimes the child shows aggression because he is looking for some sort of attention from his parents. If the children are not getting this desired attention, they may continue to escalate their aggression in order to receive that attention.

Children may also learn aggression in other ways. It has been suggested that what children actually learn from are "cognitive scripts." These scripts become strengthened by repeated observation of viewing of violent movies, and mental rehearsal within the child's fantasies. It has been said that four major factors are important as far as the imitation of models

(anyone or anything a child observes and potentially imitates) a child sees. One is the degree of similarity between the situation they originally observe and the actual situation the experience. Number two is the identification with the specific person they are observing in question. Three is whether or not the person they observe is successful. Finally, the amount of exposure to the situation they observe in question is very important (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 71).

If the child does not actually identify with the model, they are much less likely to incorporate the behavior patterns of the model into their own behavior, even if the exposure to this model is extensive. A good example of a model that is identified with in a positive and negative way that also displays learned behavior would be between a father and son. When the son did not actively identify and relate to their fathers', the level of aggressiveness in the son was lower than that of the sons who did identify and relate to their fathers' with physically aggressive fathers (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 72). When this modeling theory is put in place, the child (observer) learns different kinds of behavior and then applies these behaviors in situations they would deem appropriate (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 73).

Regardless of gender, adolescents tend to imitate their mothers more when angry with their peers, while they imitate their fathers when angry at home. I feel that this could happen especially in a home where the father is physically aggressive toward the mother. This abuse would usually occur within the home, which is why children would associate aggression at home with their father. Sexually victimized children or adolescents that become serial killers, have a poor relationship with their mother (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 26). Overall, it has been determined that mothers tend to have a greater impact on a future serial killers' behavior than fathers (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 79).

When it comes to looking at similarities between many killers, we have to look at where they grew up and their environment. Violent crime, mental illness and child abuse are all linked and associated with poverty (Steen, 1996, pg. 219). As previously mentioned, many serial killers have been victims of abuse at some point in their lives, so it is important to recognize its connection with poverty. Sociologists have also come to the conclusion that poverty happens to be the greatest predictor of violence (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 140). Now, this does not mean that we can say poverty is a cause of violence. Poverty is not the reason people choose to commit violent crime. It just happens to be a "norm" of many violent offenders. However, the level of stress experienced and the societal beliefs of aggression, depending on the area the young serial killers are raised in, could be direct correlates of poverty (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 151).

When we look at demographics and crime rates, we see that communities that are characterized by a high population turnover rate and high levels of poverty, have significantly higher violent crime rates than mobile areas that are more affluent or poor areas that are stable (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 140). The combination of poverty and the lack of access to a suitable education as well as the opportunity for a job are the most significant predictors of youth involvement in violence (Feshbach & Zagrodzka, 1997, pg. 141).

The social ills that come from living in poverty may be caused by the fact that poverty increases the stress of day-to-day life so dramatically. A child born in poverty is much more likely to be abused or experience a household with marital violence, which means they will more than likely grow to be a violent adult (Steen, 1996, pg. 220). For example, sexually abused murderers are actually more likely to be raised in a home that has minimal socioeconomic status (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 27). As I previously stated, there is a relationship between violence and

poverty, but poverty alone cannot explain why there are some individuals engage in violence and others do not.

There are many different personalities of serial killers. They all have different traits that separate them from others. Most serial killers are not considered psychotic. They are usually in touch with reality but they do not have feelings for others (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 11).

There are many ways in which we classify and group serial killers. One way is spatial mobility. Two major forms of serial killers are based on spatial mobility: geographically stable and geographically transient.

The geographically stable killer is one who usually lives in a particular area and kills within the general region of his residence. Good examples of the geographically stable killer would be John Wayne Gacy and Albert Fish. These kinds of killers are often employed in their own community. They are often well known and well respected by their peers, as well. Too frequently, obvious motive is missing. However, the motive is quite sexual in nature and they may kill a select group of victims that they choose specifically based on their needs and fantasies (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 9). The geographically transient killer usually travels continuously throughout his killing career. He typically kills in one jurisdiction and moves to another. Good examples of these would be Ted Bundy and Henry Lucas.

There are four major types of serial killers, which help psychologists categorize them. The motives that predominate each type are what make them different. These typologies would be visionary, mission oriented, hedonistic, and power/control oriented (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 10).

The visionary killers are impelled to kill because they have heard voices or they have seen visions that demand they kill a certain person or category of people. For many, the voice or

vision may be from a demon or God. An example of this would be Harvey Carignan. In psychiatric terms, this type can be deemed psychotic. These kinds of killers could use the insanity plea (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 11). The mission-oriented killer has a conscious goal in life to eliminate a certain group of people. They may determine it is their duty to rid the world of undesirable humans. This type of killer is commonly the geographically stable (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 11-12). However, the hedonistic killer has extremely perverted means of thrill seeking. Their expressions of pure enjoyment are common. They are the type of person who kills for fun. Cannibalism, dismemberment, necrophilia and other forms of sexual deviance are highly prevalent (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 13).

The power/control-oriented killer tends to receive gratification from complete control of the victim. Ted Bundy and the Red Demon Killer are good examples of this kind of killer. They live by their own code and they fit the pattern of a psycho/sociopath. Their behavior indicates a character disorder, not a complete break from reality (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 13-14).

When discussing behavioral indicators, we use "internal" and "external" to classify these behaviors. Internal behaviors are thinking patterns and experiences within or unique to the individual. These are most consistent over three developmental periods: daydreaming, compulsive masturbation, and isolation. External behaviors are overt actions that can be observed by others. The most reported of these behaviors are chronic lying, rebelliousness, stealing, cruelty to children, and assaults on adults (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 30).

Another way to profile serial killers is to determine if they are organized or disorganized. Organized murderers have high intelligence, social competence, do skilled work, are usually sexually competent, and tend to be the first-born. Their father's work was usually stable, they experienced inconsistent childhood discipline, they are able to control their mood during the

murder, they tend to use alcohol during the murder, they tend to live with a partner, they have the ability to be mobile usually with a car in good condition, they follow the murder in the news and other forms of media, and they may change jobs or leave town if they feel threatened. Opposite from the organized killer, the characteristics of the disorganized killer are these: average intelligence, social immaturity, a poor work history, usually sexually incompetent, tend not to be the first born, their father's work was unstable, they experienced harsh discipline in childhood, they were extremely anxious during their murders, they had a minimal use of alcohol as well as minimal situational stress, they tend to live alone but also live or work near the scene of the murders, they had minimal interest in the news and other media, and they experienced a minimal change in lifestyle throughout their entire lives (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 122).

The crime scenes of organized and disorganized killers are also different. The crime scene of an organized killer would be quite different from that of a disorganized killer: a planned offense, they would victim a targeted stranger, they personalize the victim, the conversation with the victim is controlled, the crime scene reflects overall control, it demands a submissive victim, restraints are probably used, there are aggressive acts before the death, the body is hidden, weapons/evidence is absent, and the body of the victim is usually transported. The crime scene of the disorganized killer would be: a spontaneous offense, the victim and the location are known, they have depersonalized their victim, there is minimal conversation, the crime scene is random and sloppy, there is sudden violence to the victim, there is a minimal use of restraints, sexual acts occur after death, the body is left in view, evidence and the weapon tend to be present, the body is left at the scene of the death (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 123).

Before a killer commits the first occurs, most of his fantasies have focused on killing. The fantasies that evolve after the first murder usually focus on perfecting various phases of the

murder (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 33). An important term involved with murder is *modus operandi* (also known as MO). The MO is how the killer actually murders someone. The MO of a crime may vary over time, with changes occurring if there is some flaw that emerges or while they are trying to confuse the police. The MO is usually originally chosen because it is practical and involves a method used in their fantasies.

Another term that is specific to each killer is the signature. The signature is a specific ritual and enables a series of crimes to be linked behaviorally (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 33). For example, the Boston Strangler always tied whatever item he used to strangle his victims into a bow. The police are usually able to identify which murders are related based on the signature. Once they know what they are looking for, they will be able to accurately identify who committed which murders.

Murderers tend to believe they are entitled to whatever they want and that they live in an unjust world. The fantasies emerge as an important escape and a place in which they express emotion and control regarding other human beings (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 34). The beginning kills are usually meticulously planned and the kills disintegrate as the plan is executed. There is always a cooling off period after the murder, but the amount of time tends to differ between each kill (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 63). Toward the end of their murdering careers, there is very little time between kills (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 15). Their first kill usually produces fear, revulsion and remorse. But it also creates a feeling of addiction, as well (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 154).

There is always a "triggering factor" that drives a serial killer to commit murder. These factors are almost endless in their variety but they can seem quite trivial to us, even though they are extremely important to the killer (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 63). For example, a female who had

an attractive figure and looked like she tried maintaining her looks would trigger the BTK Killer. When their first murder is triggered, they are usually completely aware of their long-standing obsession and preference for a very active fantasy life. They tend to be dedicated to violent, sexualized thoughts and fantasies (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 33).

The victim of the murder is not ever chosen completely at random. Victims are usually hunted down and then stalked for quite a period of time before they are attacked (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 155). Once the killer decides the type of person, he will probably stake out a specific location to hunt. He will have methodically studied the location and factors that could affect an emergency getaway (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 38). This planning gives them the ability to have an in depth look at the place they are going to attack their victim. They have to make sure they know what they are going to do in case something were to backfire on them (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 289).

Now, the actual act of murder occurs in one of two ways: act focused or processed focused. The act-focused murder is swift, incisive and directed toward accomplishing the goal. These tend to not be well planned. The gratification of this kind of murder lies within the murder act itself (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 119-120). Killers tend to become highly aroused while they are committing the murder, which has actually led to killers leaving semen behind at their crime scenes. Processed focused murders are characterized by sadistic methods of torture, sodomy, rape and murder. There is great planning and detail present in these murders. Mutilation and dismemberment are highly prevalent. The hedonistic and the power/control typologies are most common with processed focused murders (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 120).

The serial killer we will be looking at later in this paper is a specific kind of serial killer, a lust/sexual serial killer. First taking a general look at sex murder and its history, however, is

important. It made its first major appearance in the late 19th century with the most notorious serial killer known, Jack the Ripper (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 2). Jack the Ripper, known for being the one of the world's most infamous serial killer, was actually never identified. People have their theories, but we will never truly know who Jack was or why he killed the women he did. However, he gives us quite a bit to look at when looking at sex murder.

The 19th century attitude to sex could have prompted the rise of sex crime. This would be because people began to become fascinated by sex, which was quite forbidden in the public eye (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 3). Sex in this time period was considered to be a "forbidden fruit" that people were not supposed to talk about. Sex was meant to be between a man and woman who were married, prostitutes were some of the lowliest women in the community, and sexual scandals were horrifying to the people. So, when Jack the Ripper came along and targeted prostitutes, as well as surgically removing certain parts of the women that signified sex, the people were astounded and they had something forbidden that they could discuss.

Sexually driven killers, such as Jack the Ripper, usually murder out of inner compulsion and they tend to experience a cooling off period after the murder has been committed (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 2). This cooling off period tends to get shorter and shorter as the murders progress, which is why the murders usually get closer and closer together during a killer's murdering career. There are five components for fully understanding sexual homicide which I will be listing, and then giving a more in depth look at each one individually: the murderer's social environment, child and adolescent influential events, patterned responses to these events, subsequent actions toward others, and the killer's reactions via a mental "feedback filter" to their murderous acts (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 69).

The first significant factor regarding the motivational model is the ineffective social environment. This kind of social environment would include: the child being ignored, a family that fails to intervene in the child's life, a family that supports the child's distortions, and the family being non-productive in the child's life.

The second component is the influential events of the child's and/or adolescent's life. This usually includes abuse, both physical and sexual. Developmental failure is also an issue. This includes a lack of social attachment and a weak emotional response to other people. They also usually experience interpersonal failure. These failures would be inconsistent care and/or contact with other people.

The third component is the child's patterned responses to these events. These children usually have very obvious personality traits that would be considered unhealthy or abnormal. These traits usually include social isolation, autoerotic activities, fetishes, rebelliousness, aggressiveness, uncontrollable lying, and a sense of entitlement. The structure of their cognitive mapping and processing is also abnormal. They are usually overpowered by daydreams, fantasies, thoughts with a very strong visual component, and nightmares. These children also tend to have a lot of internal dialogue that incorporate strong beliefs, but they do not understand the full spectrum of a belief. They are unable to understand there can be more than one outcome to an issue. These beliefs involve cause and effect, and the probability of how things are going to happen. The children tend to deal only with absolutes and generalizations; they are unable to understand that things can be outside the norm. Many themes are present within these children, especially regarding their fantasies. These themes include dominance, revenge, violence, rape/molestation, inflicting pain on others/self, power/control, death, torture and mutilation. With

these themes come abnormal arousal levels. This usually means that high levels of aggressive experiences primarily arouse them, and they require a high level of stimulation.

The number four component concerns actions toward others and themselves. Throughout childhood there is usually a high level of cruelty to animals as well as cruelty to other children. Joyless, hostile, aggressive, repetitive play patterns are very apparent. The children show a certain disregard for others. Setting fires, stealing, and destroying property are also very important telltale signs of criminal behavior. As adolescents and into adulthood, these people may participate in assaults, burglary, arson, abduction, rape, murder that is nonsexual, and sex-oriented murder (rape, torture/mutilation, necrophilia).

Finally, these people have a feedback filter that is a part of their mental process. This filter tries to justify the acts that the murderer commits. They also usually sort out the errors in the commission of the crime so they can do better next time. This feedback also helps them experience their increased arousal state as well as the increase in the need for dominance, power, and control, which ultimately drive their behavior. Eventually, by using this filter, they know how to continue their acts without detection or punishment (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 70).

This motivational model is important to understand because it gives us a better look at what these people have gone through in their lives, as well as what could be going through their minds after they have begun committing crime, especially after they begin committing murders.

Lust killers will usually kill by strangulation, blunt force, or the use of a sharp, pointed instrument (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 66). The lust murderer usually tortures, cuts, maims, or slashes the victim in the regions on or about the genitalia, rectum, breast, neck, throat and buttocks after the murder. These areas usually contain sexual significance to the killers and they serve as sexual stimuli (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 64).

Souvenirs are usually taken from their victims. These souvenirs can be anything important to the killer, such as jewelry or hair, anything that gives them gratification. As far as souvenirs go, some will even take video, films and/or pictures of the victims, dead or alive. These tend to be kept for subsequent gratification (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 69).

Within the classification of lust murderers, there are two different types: organized nonsocial and disorganized asocial personalities (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 65). The organized nonsocial lust killer is an egocentric that generally dislikes people, but is proficient at posing as an outwardly warm person for as long as necessary in order to forward his own interests. These killers typically begin to demonstrate hostility as they pass through puberty and into adolescence. They would be classified as troublemakers and manipulators. They aim to get even with society and inflict pain and punishment on others (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 65). The nonsocial type often commits murder in a secluded or isolated location and they may later transport the body to an area where it will later be found. They want the excitement resulting from the publicity about the body's discovery and its impact on the victim's community (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 66). They almost always return to the dumping location to determine if the body has been discovered and to check on the progress of the investigation. They like to inject themselves into the investigation. They do this to the point of becoming a "regular" at police haunts or the department to overhear news (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 71).

The disorganized asocials, on the other hand, are usually loners. They experience difficulty in negotiating interpersonal relationships and they often feel rejected. They tend to commit crime in a more frenzied and less methodical manner. They are more likely to commit murder in proximity to their residence or place of employment. They are the nice and quiet people who keeps to themselves, although they may have been involved in voyeurism as

adolescents (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 65). The asocial type usually leaves the body at the scene of the murder and there is usually no attempt to conceal the body (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 66). They may return to the scene to engage in further mutilation or to relive the experience (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 70).

Serial killing is all about power, which is why researchers have come up with the concept of the Power Syndrome. The mind of a serial killer is typically in line with the mind of a child. As mentioned before, fantasy takes precedence over actuality and the fantasy is about power (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 137). Lust murderers have a sense of inadequacy and inferiority, which usually produces resentment. The killing tends to relieve their anger and produce a sense of power, which makes them feel worthwhile (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 138).

There is also a Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome. This occurs when the killer recognizes that his actions have turned him into a social outcast. The result could be suicide or a stupid mistake that leads to arrest. The personality essentially becomes split, and they become two different people. The mistake that allows the police to catch them is Jekyll's attempt to destroy Hyde (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 178). Most killers are self-divided in the sense that they feel remorse but are unable to stop murdering. But the lust murderer is the one who decides to take what he wants from society by force or stealth (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 185). The killer may attempt to deal with this split personality through intellectual self-justification, making some sort of error that leads to an arrest. Or the suicide syndrome may result in actual self-destruction (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 191).

Finally, there is the Roman Emperor Syndrome. This arises out of the natural need of all human beings for some degree of self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-confidence includes the ability to stick to our own aims and beliefs in the face of opposition. Once most of us have

established what we regard as a comfortable degree of self-confidence, we tend to turn our attention to other matters, like schoolwork and making a living. However, some people fail to achieve this comfortable level because of early trauma or because people whose respect they failed to win surround them (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 268). This type of killer lives in a world of fantasy and self-justification, and they usually punish society through murder (Wilson & Seaman, pg. 285).

There is not a one hundred percent accurate answer as to why a serial killer does what he does, but there are definitely different aspects to investigate. A common mistake made when studying the "whys" of serial murder is ignoring internal motives (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 75).

In one view, the act of murder becomes a passionate attempt to perform a sacrifice to restore what is "good" or "right." Despite the irrational or chaotic surroundings of the murder, the killer will justify or has justified the act as necessary to restore a previous wrong. Another theory is that the killer feels compelled to answer a challenge to his self worth. Through a situation involving a future killer being humiliated, they perceive it as an attack on their personal claim of moral worth (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 77).

Attempts to explain serial murder usually emanate from one or a combination of three possible areas: psychogenic, sociogenic and biogenic. Psychogenic explanations look for psychological causes, which contain viable reasons for the perpetration of homicide. A seductive mother, abusive father, sibling rivalries, a rejecting parent, poorly developed superegos, a lack of psychological defenses, and poor impulse control fall under the psychogenic. The sociogenic explanations identify and examine social causes for serial murder. Social causes include poverty, unemployment and a lack of good education. Finally, biogenic factors include biology and

heredity. The biogenic explanation would include underdeveloped ears, harelips, elongated second toes, bedwetting as a child, psychomotor epilepsy, and abnormal readings on the electroencephalograms (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 115). The true reason for someone's becoming a serial killer is most likely a combination of all three of these explanations.

The genes of human beings and our environment are constantly changing and evolving. There is always an ongoing relationship between genes and the environment. Human beings are a product of both forces (Steen, 1996, pg. 5).

Behavior is one of the most complex and subtle components of human beings. Geneticists have always had a hard time determining the genetic basis of behavior. There is actually a lot of evidence that human behavior is inherited (Steen, 1996, pg. 10). Donald Hebb of McGill University said that "heredity determines the range through which environment can modify the individual" (Steen, 1996, pg. 19). This means that our biology and our heredity have the ability to determine how much the environment affects us.

Some people see human beings as robots whose every action is controlled by genes, regardless of what choices they have tried to make. However, others see nature as constantly at war with nurture for control over an individual. Nurture for this paper is defined as the social environment that surrounds and protects a child from birth to independence. Early interactions with parents, siblings, and members of extended family who happen to be around, as well as teachers and friends, are a part of this social environment (Steen, 1996, pg. 49). On the other hand, environmental influences can be defined as anything not directly coded in our genes. That makes this term "environmental" much broader and opens the door to many factors that may be overlooked in the physical environment (Steen, 1996, pg. 50). Another theory is that humans are a blank slate that is written on by experience. It is commonly accepted that we can control how a

child will grow up based on the right set of experiences (Steen, 1996, pg. 21). However, this may not necessarily be true. There have been split twin studies that suggest around half of everything that makes us human is inherited from our parents. Therefore, half of the behaviors we see are the result of the environment influencing us as individuals (Steen, 1996, pg. 32).

Unfortunately, the interplay between genes and the environment could take a lifetime to understand. For example, antisocial boys are more likely to experience social rejection as adults and they have a higher than normal rate of divorce, unemployment and criminal behavior (Steen, 1996, pg. 53).

A direct interaction between mother and child is extremely important. The optimal development of a child may also require a father or an extended male family member that can serve as the male figure (Steen, 1996, pg. 51). Most murderers have said that they did not have a satisfactory relationship with their father that and their relationship with the mother was highly uncertain in emotional quality (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 21). The quality of their attachments to parents and other family members is the most important factor in how they relate to and value society as adults. The structure and quality of family interaction is very important in a child's development, especially in the way the child perceives family members and their social interactions. A couple of the problems observed among families suggest inconsistent contact between some family members and inadequate patterns of relating (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 19). This means the child may not have the ability to identify with certain people within their family because of inconsistent contact. They will also have a hard time interacting socially with other people in their own lives, outside of their families. Another major issue within families is substance abuse. Almost 70% of murderer's families have a history of alcohol abuse, while 1/3 of the families had histories of drug abuse (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 17). When it comes to family,

conflict between parents can potentially have very damaging consequences for children. It may lead to parental neglect. The child could also end up in the middle of a power struggle between parents or they can be excluded entirely (Steen, 1996, pg. 52).

A child's environment has to fall within a normal and expected range of variation for normal child and adult development. However, children are usually unaware of environments other than their own. They cannot accurately assess the quality of their own environment, which means they are unable to appreciate what they do or do not have. For example, children won't understand their family's level of poverty until they reach adulthood. It is commonly thought that certain environments will ultimately hinder a child's ability to develop and function appropriately. However, it has been shown that many different environments may be functionally equivalent to another, as long as they fall within an acceptable range of variation. If this environment falls outside the acceptable range of variation, it may fail to encourage appropriate growth and development, although it is important to note that many environments may be neutral in terms of effect on development. There are very few environments that are actually detrimental (Steen, 1996, pg. 59). If most childhood environments are functionally equivalent, then efforts made to supplement that environment may not actually be very productive. An example of this may include having a child listen to Mozart while still in the womb in the hopes that he or she will become a prodigy (Steen, 1996, pg. 60).

Children may actually have the ability to structure their own environments. For example, a child may show a certain dislike for a specific babysitter. By that child displaying a dislike for the babysitter, the parents may remove that person from the child's life and find someone more suitable for the child. This would actually make it quite difficult to intervene successfully in the development of a particular child. They could actually resist a structure being imposed on them

(Steen, 1996, pg. 61). This freedom to manipulate naturally increases with age. I would say this is the natural order of things, though. As we get older, we decide what we want to do with our lives, who we want in our lives, as well as how we are going to live.

The interaction between our genes and the environment continues for life. This interaction is very likely what guides our career choice, spouse, and our hobbies and recreation (Steen, 1996, pg. 60). Therefore, when discussing heritable behaviors, childhood antisocial behavior is exactly that. This behavior also strongly predisposes an individual to juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. However, this is not necessarily an accurate indicator of these outcomes since 87% of American adolescents participate in antisocial behavior before the age of 21. These behaviors could include assault, vandalism, theft, and arson (Steen, 1996, pg. 223). There is a difference between both genders, however: violent men seem to be more strongly affected by their genes, while violent women are more strongly affected by their environment. A male is also more likely to become a criminal if he has low social or socioeconomic status or if he is moved from foster home to foster home frequently as a child (Steen, 1996, pg. 227). The same likelihood does not seem to be present in females. Some risk factors that can best predict which adolescents will commit violent crime as adults include drug use, poor school performance, low verbal intelligence, childhood behavior problems, inconsistent parental supervision, little or no discipline, a dysfunctional family, parental separation, childhood abuse, witnessing of violent acts, and poverty.

Apparently, there is also a very clear link between ADHD and criminality (Steen, 1996, pg. 229). ADHD paired with an antisocial personality disorder usually leads to incarceration in the case of criminal adolescents. It can also lead to habitual truancy, verbal abuse of teachers, consistent insubordination, running away from home, destruction of property, and pathological

lying (Steen, 1996, pg. 230). Violence itself is not heritable, although conditions associated with violence can be inherited (Steen, 1996, pg. 237).

When trying to understand serial killers, a proposed hypothesis is that an early experience of humiliation can translate into the most vicious of criminal acts. This only applies if the killer knows someone is trying to humiliate him (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 78). By experiencing this humiliation early on in life, serial killers have learned conscious hatred toward a specific group of people. However, Freud concluded that traumatic memories and emotions from a person's past could be housed in the subconscious, which could later have a strong effect on the emotional life and behaviors of that person (Holmes & Holmes, 1998, pg. 88). This could mean that unaddressed traumatic and early damaging experiences to the murderers as children set into motion certain thinking patterns, therefore turning them into killers (Ressler et al., 1998, pg. 95).

Dennis Rader, also known as the BTK Killer, has been seen as an anomaly among serial killers. He has fallen very much outside the regular realm of killers, which ultimately led to it being very difficult to catch him. BTK stands for Bind, Torture, Kill, which is exactly what he did to each and every one of his victims. As I will show, he seemed to be a normal and contributing member of society; however, he successfully hid his sadistic secrets from everyone for a number of years. Even one of his coworkers had told the police that Dennis seemed completely ordinary, approachable and polite; however, he could also be stern and controlling at times (Wenzl, Potter, Kelly, & Laviana, 2007, pg. 87-88).

Dennis was born March 9, 1945 in Pittsburg, Kansas to William Rader and Dorothea Rader. He was the second of four boys in his family and he had a rough childhood. He grew up around the railroads for the most part in small town Pittsburg (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 243). His father served in the Marine Corps during World War II and after the war worked for Kansas Gas

and Electric. He stuck with Kansas Gas and Electric for 37 years until he retired in 1985 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 150). His mother was gone a lot for work because of her long hours, so he was mainly taken care of by his grandparents (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 243). She worked for 26 years as a bookkeeper at the grocery store. She retired in January of 1986. She had the reputation for being a gentle person who was greatly appreciated by her neighbors and other community members who knew her. Both of his parents made sure to take him to church every Sunday, as well as Boy Scout meetings. According to their youngest son, Jeff, they always tried to do the very best they could by their four sons (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 150). He was also the kind of child who tied nooses and hanged dogs, as well as cats, in barns around his home (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 5). Upon being caught as the BTK Killer, he actually told the police that he believes his love for sadism started in childhood when he saw his grandfather butcher chickens. When he saw the blood and the chickens hopping around after their heads had been cut off, he had been filled with a sense of satisfaction he had not had before (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 313).

As a boy, it was clear that he had a very unhealthy obsession with sex and females. He was an avid pornography watcher and had even nicknamed his penis "Sparky." As a fantasy, he enjoyed imagining himself as a secret agent, an assassin and a shadow (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 4). He secretly loved looking at "girly books" about sadomasochism and bondage. His mother, however, was extremely disapproving of this obsession. She had told him God would kill him for masturbating. She had also caught him multiple times masturbating into her underwear, in which case she would beat him with a belt. He would usually fight back while being beaten, but his mother would hold his hands behind his back. He then began to realize that "Sparky" liked this type of discipline (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 244). However, to contradict this statement, his younger brother, Jeff, claimed there was never abuse in their home, physical or sexual (Wenzl et.

al., 2007, pg. 332). By the age of 18, he was a frequent window peeper and he also participated in stealing women's panties (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 244). As a teenager, he constantly fantasized about tying women up and strangling them (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 313). Even as an adult, his fantasies continued. After he killed his first family, which I will get to shortly, he continued to fantasize about enslaving the entire family in the afterlife (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 316). As an adult, Dennis majored in administration of justice at Wichita State University. This allowed him to study police officers, as well as learn more the search for the BTK Killer without being conspicuous (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 18). Upon being caught in 2005, he claimed to the police he had a demon within him that made him kill people. He had even named his demon, Batter, and said that "he" was the only accomplice in the murders (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 346).

In order to pick his victims, he would usually hunt and spy on women for new "projects." He would often follow them to and from work, while writing notes on all of them. He only stopped pursuing them if they did not seem to be a safe target. A safe target would be a female that didn't live with family or didn't have a dog. While investigating these projects, he always gave them nicknames (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 20).

Dennis Rader's first victims were 11 year old, Josie Otero (nicknamed "Little Mex") and her family on January 15, 1974. Dennis was 28 years old at the time (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 4). The Otero family was chosen mainly because the females were Hispanic, and they turned him on (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 5). The interesting thing about this is that most of the time, killers will pick a gender they are attracted to as well as stick with their own race. Dennis is a Caucasian, straight male; therefore, we would have expected him to kill white females. For his first kill, he was not even close to being prepared. He had been targeting Josie and her mother as the perfect victims. Unfortunately for him, the entire family was home when he appeared. He ended up

killing the entire family out of sheer panic. After killing the Otero family, he kept a diary of all of his escapades. He finished the Otero story on February 3, 1974 and kept it in a binder, also signing it "BTK" (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 19).

When looking at the crime scene at this first murder, investigators found multiple ligature marks on the throats of all the Otero victims. They all looked as if they had been strangled more than once. There was also dried fluid on Josie's thigh and the floor near her body. This gave the impression that Dennis had masturbated on her (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 12). He had also taken a small trophy from the crime scene, Josie's father's watch (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 18). One thing the police also noticed was the fact that the phone lines were cut. This was a very important signature that Dennis would use to keep his victims from being able to call for help.

Kathryn Bright (nicknamed "Project Lights Out") was victim number two. She was killed on April 4, 1974 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 20). Dennis first saw Kathryn on his way to lunch with his wife. The first thing he noticed was her good figure, long blonde hair, jean jacket and her old beaded purse (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 22). Even though he had taken every precaution to make sure she would be a safe target, he made several mistakes and was almost caught. Her brother, Kevin, was accidentally present when Dennis appeared and lived to tell the tale. However, Kathryn died about four hours after her attack.

Because the police did not have a lot of information to go on, they did not originally believe the Otero murders and the Bright murder were related. Among these issues was the fact that there were two different ways the killing occurred. The Otero family was strangled and stabbed, but Kathryn was strangled, shot and stabbed (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 28). However, her phone lines had also been cut, like the Otero family's.

A few months after killing Kathryn, Dennis was hired on at ADT (American District Telegraph). By getting this job, he now had the ability to get inside homes as a security installer (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 34). After Kathryn's murder, though, Dennis was inactive. He later admitted that he stopped killing for a while because he was too busy being a husband, a father, and holding onto a job. However, none of these obligations kept him from hunting for another victim (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 37). Even though he was unable to put any plans into action, he was unable to keep himself from actively hunting. He was constantly looking for a new victim to fulfill his fantasies. Upon finding one "target," he would always have a backup target just in case one of them was not going to work out (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 38).

Cheryl Gilmour was "Project Blackout." She lived with her friend, Judy Clark, and Judy's younger sister, Karin. All three of these girls were the original targets on March 17, 1977 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 39). However, Dennis had to go to a backup target because none of the girls were home the night he chose to go out. Therefore, Shirley Vian was victim three, killed on March 17, 1977. When he entered her home, he noticed that Shirley's children were also in the house. When he realized the children were home, he convinced all of them to sit in the bathroom and proceeded to lock them in while he killed their mother. He had originally wanted to kill her children, as well. However, he didn't feel like he was going to have enough time to kill everyone because the children were screaming out the window in the bathroom they were locked in. Before leaving Shirley's house, he stole two pairs of women's underwear (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 43). With this murder, the police were convinced Shirley's and the Otero's were related. However, there were many differences among them. With Shirley's murder, there was no semen, no cut phone lines and Shirley's children lived. Kathryn's murder was still not considered to be connected (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 47). After he killed Shirley, he mailed a poem he had written

about killing her. He called it *Shirley Locks* and he sent it to a very popular newspaper in the area, *The Wichita Eagle*. No one at the newspaper had understood the meaning behind the poem and they were unable to connect it to BTK. Because of this, the poem went unpublished, which made Dennis very upset (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 64). This actually angered him to the point of writing a letter to a local television station. His letter was quite blunt and he drew pictures of dead women essentially claiming to have killed all the people the town had recently lost (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 65).

After waiting a mere nine months, Nancy Fox was killed December 8, 1977. He had noticed that she was small, pretty and she appeared to spend a lot of time on her hair and clothes (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 55). When he broke into Nancy's house and cut her phone lines, he killed her. Before leaving her house, he took her license, silk lingerie from her dresser and her pearl necklace. The pearl necklace was actually then given to his wife as a gift (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 57 & 60). He later confessed to the police that Nancy had been the perfect murder for him. There was not a man, dog or child that could have interrupted him (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 58). Because she lived alone, he knew the chances of someone finding her were very slim. Therefore, he called 911 the morning after he killed Nancy and reported her homicide. A major reason he did this was that he was really itching to tell someone what he had done (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 59). He needed to stroke his own ego a little bit, and this was the only way he could do that without getting caught.

The chief of police at the time had revealed to the public some of the details of the murders after he had sent a letter to the station (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 69). This announcement pretty much sent the whole city of Wichita into a state of panic. This time period between the

letter being sent and the murders continuing correlates with the fact that his daughter was born in June of 1978 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 74).

At the time the letter had been sent, though, Dennis had stopped killing until 1985. Marine Hedge (nicknamed "Project Cookie") was killed April 26, 1985. She was picked partly because she was a very convenient victim since she only lived six doors down from Dennis's home. It was obviously very risky for him to choose a victim so close to his home. But he had grown quite lazy about stalking since Nancy. He also wanted to prove to law enforcement that he was still smarter than them (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 99-100). He thought that the police would never think a killer would murder so close to his home. Her body was the first one he took from the murder scene and ditched somewhere else. Before he dumped her body, he took her, naked, to the church he attended. He then proceeded to position her body to take pictures before redressing her and finally dumping her (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 104). Marine was found nine days after she was killed. She had been hidden under brush in a ditch. Her body had been very much decomposed by the time she had been found because of the moisture in the ditch (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 102).

Vicki Wegerle (nicknamed "Project Piano") was murdered September 16, 1986. What really attracted him to her was how beautifully she played the piano. He would listen to her play her piano from outside her window. She was young, blonde and alone for most of the workday (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 105-106). However, things turned out quite badly for him when he broke into her home to kill Vicki. When he attacked her, she told him how her husband was going to be home from work soon. He then became quite panicked, so he had to kill her quickly, which obviously took away a lot of the satisfaction he usually experienced during the kills. After killing her, he positioned her body for pictures but left before being able to masturbate over her

(Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 108). He then decided to steal her driver's license as a trophy before quickly leaving the house (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 114).

Dolores "Dee" Davis (nicknamed "Project Dogside") was killed January 18, 1991 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 127-129). After killing her, Dennis transported her body to a bridge several miles north of her home. He also ended up leaving a painted plastic mask next to her body (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 134). It is believed that he actually returned to her body the day after he killed her in order to take pictures. The thought is that he used the painted mask to make her sexier, since she would have already started to decompose, making her less attractive (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 136). It was later discovered that he had used this same painted mask previously for himself. He would actually wear it when he put on women's clothing while photographing himself in bondage. He also took her license and Social Security card as a trophy of her murder (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 137).

In May of 1991, Dennis was hired as a compliance officer to catch stray dogs and to enforce zoning rules (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 140). This was a very important turning point in his life. He had now been given a position of power over people he might have believed were lesser than himself. After he received this position, people said he was an "authority nut." He would actually step on people's lawns and measure the grass to tell them whether or not it was too tall. When pets got loose, he would take them away and sometimes he would even have them euthanized. The fact that he would sometimes have loose dogs euthanized goes back to the cruelty toward animals from his childhood. This obviously stuck with him all the way into adulthood. On occasion, he would walk unannounced into the homes of single women and ask them detailed questions about their schedules, children and boyfriends (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 142). One woman, Misty King, actually moved out of town because Dennis was harassing her.

She had actually caught him sitting outside her house at least 20 different times during a six month stretch (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 175). He was also harassing and taking photographs of another woman, Kimberly Comer, and her children (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 273).

After both of his children had left the house, he would usually patrol the streets hunting for new victims. He also picked up a habit of cutting out advertisements from the newspaper that featured women and younger girls modeling outfits, as well as underwear. He would collect hundreds of these photos and would usually paste them on index cards so he could write his fantasies on the back (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 175).

It had been ten years since Dennis killed. It had been so long that people really didn't know who BTK was anymore unless they had been in Wichita at the time of the original killings. However, the people at *The Eagle* newspaper decided to do an anniversary piece over the murders 30 years later. In the article, it was mentioned that no one knew about BTK unless they had lived in Wichita long enough. This made Dennis extremely angry (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 182). After the article ran, he sent a letter to the newspaper containing photocopies of the photographs he had taken of Vicki Wengerle as well as a photograph of her driver's license (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 183). This was immediately turned over to the police. They then realized that BTK was still living among them and that he was angry about the piece they had done on him.

After the newspaper turned over the letter to the police, the police ended up bringing in a profiler to help them catch BTK. The profiler told them that BTK definitely enjoyed publicity. Because of this, the profiler urged the police to call together news conferences while making communication the main focus. They were to read from a script and to not answer any questions from the press (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 196). It was recommended that they pick one person to

conduct all the news conferences. This would give BTK a specific face to fixate on. The profiler wanted to push Dennis into either making a mistake or into communicating with the police. They were instructed to imply that they were making progress on the case. The strategy behind this was because if he thought they were onto him, he might be more reluctant to kill again (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 197). They were very concerned about going public with what they knew about him because if they pushed him too far, he might go ahead and kill again, so they had to be extremely mindful of this.

After the news conferences began, Dennis sent a word search puzzle, photocopies of ID cards, a photocopy of a badge with the words "Special Officer," and thirteen chapter headings for a presumed book titled "*The BTK Story*" to the television station that were holding the conferences (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 215 & 217). The station immediately turned these materials over to the police and all the females were given special surveillance and protection. The contents of the package were Dennis's way of trying to point the police in the right direction of who he was. The word search and the badge along with the chapter headings were all supposed to tell a story.

On June 9, 2004 there was a plastic bag taped to the back of a stop sign that had "BTK Field Gram" typed out onto it (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 218). Within this bag were detailed accounts of what had happened to the Otero family back in 1974 (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 219). This was actually a copy of what he had originally written down in his diary immediately after killing them.

Another package was left in a drop box near the center of the city on October 22, 2004. This package contained a four-page document labeled "C2." It appeared to be a very detailed and chronological account of his childhood and early adulthood (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 243).

On December 8, 2004 he called the television station to alert them as to where the next BTK package was. He was actually hung up on immediately by them and another business he called. Both these businesses believed it to be a hoax so they decided to not report it to anyone. Another business, QuikTrip, answered the call and wrote down all the instructions Dennis gave them (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 255). The package was finally found and turned over to the police on December 13th (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 256). This package contained Nancy's driver's license as well as a doll that had pubic hair drawn on it and panty hose wrapped about its neck (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 257-258). This doll was supposed to be a mini-model of Nancy, considering it contained her hair color and the panty hose around its neck, which is how he had strangled Nancy. It also contained a two-page letter about Nancy's death and how proud he was about what he had done (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 258).

Another package was dropped off in the bed of a randomly chosen pickup truck at a local Home Depot. This one contained a beaded necklace and several pages of typed notes. The man who originally found this packaged ended up tossing it in the trash (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 260). A few days later, a postcard was received asking the police whether or not they had ever received the package that was thrown out (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 264). Upon retrieving the package, the police also asked to see the security video at the Home Depot. When they reviewed the video, they realized BTK drove a dark colored Jeep Cherokee (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 271). They were unable to get a license plate, but they knew something crucial about BTK and he didn't even know.

At this point in Dennis's life, in early 2005, he had just taken up the position as the president of the congregation at Christ Lutheran Church (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 274). The police were still talking to him through the packages and news conferences and they felt like they

needed to push BTK to the edge and make him slip up so they could catch him. Their chance came on February 16, 2005 when they received an envelope with a single floppy disk in it. When they put it in the computer, they discovered that disk was registered to a computer under the name Dennis and it had last been used at the Christ Lutheran Church. The police went ahead and Google searched the church website and saw that the president was Dennis Rader (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 276). They had finally figured out who BTK really was after 31 years of killing and silence.

Dennis Rader was arrested on February 25, 2005. They took him into the station and began interviewing him. He was interviewed for about three hours before finally confessing, saying, "I'm BTK" (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 305). He also went ahead and told the police where all the evidence and photographs were in his house (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 308). In total, over a two-day period, Dennis spoke with the police for 33 hours (Wenzl et. al., 2007, pg. 326). It was obvious that he took pride in everything he had done over the past 31 years, and he was finally able to share with the world what he had done. He confessed to every murder in court and pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to a minimum of 175 years in prison. Dennis Rader is currently being held at El Dorado Correctional Facility in Kansas and he will be there for the rest of his life.

Upon analyzing Dennis Rader, I think the most interesting and amazing thing about him is how normal his life really was from the outside. He lived with a wife and children over a span of 31 years while hiding very serious information from everyone. Even though he was not killing people over that entire span, he was still sexually deviant and had plenty of photographs to prove it; however, he had still been able to hide this from his wife. He had given a victim's necklace to his wife and she had no idea until the police told her and she gave it back absolutely horrified.

The fact that he was the president of a congregation just goes to show that anyone could potentially be a killer.

For my analysis, I will be including a lot of the facts previously mentioned as well as my own interpretations of how and why they are important. Dennis Rader fits quite a few of the general characteristics we generally give to serial killers. First off, he is a white male, between the ages of 25-34 when he begins killing, is fairly intelligent and has kept up with school. He was very typical of many serial killers who kill with "hands on" weapons, as I mentioned before. He almost always used rope or some sort of strangulation device to kill his victims.

I would most definitely hazard a guess that he was deluded by his vanity and believed that he was entitled to torture and kill these women. He took great pride in what he had done and never truly experienced remorse. He tended to have an exaggerated view of himself as well as his power. I am of the opinion that he wanted to exert his power over the women he killed because it was not being recognized by the women, mainly his mother, in his life. As a child, he had participated in the torturing and killing of animals in the neighborhood. Given the evidence of his mentioning the killing of the chickens and how that made him feel, it is obvious that he had an abnormal response to this, which should have raised concerns.

Based on the fact that he was attending college during four of his killings, he would be considered of good intelligence and he had the ability to do quite well in school. When he was growing up, his family would have been considered financially comfortable, which is also common for serial killers. One thing that makes Dennis a little different from other killers, though, is the fact that he actually excelled in school and his employment. He was able to apply himself to everything he put his mind to. Work came very easy to him and he was considered

good at his jobs throughout life. However, social interaction seemed to be his downfall. He was considered not charming, but almost domineering and awkward in demeanor.

As a child, he displayed the aggressive behaviors common with serial killers. He showed rebelliousness towards authority, especially when he was consistently masturbating in his mother's underwear, even though he was being punished for it. Being disciplined was not an unpleasant experience for him; it was actually a tool used for arousal, as he got older. His cruelty to animals, as mentioned before, is a huge sign of his hostility and aggression. I personally feel that the observation and arousal experience he had when his grandfather had cut off the chicken's head is really what formed his views on sadism. This may have really stuck with him throughout life and he constantly referenced it, either consciously or subconsciously.

Into his adolescence and even into adulthood, he experienced sexual problems and violent experiences, all while having a dominant sexual fantasy life, as described in his narrative above. I believe a lot of these issues began with his mother's extreme negative reaction to his masturbation. The fact that she was condemning him for failure in the afterlife could have been a mentally traumatizing event that stuck with him subconsciously. Because of this event and other negative interaction with his mother, he could have learned to despise her because she told him that the "good" feelings he got from his sexual experiences were bad. As he was a highly sexed child, this moment definitely had the power to be extremely pivotal in his life. As a teenager, he admitted to being a "peeping tom" which is a major sign of sexual deviation. This would also lend itself to his strong reliance on visual sexual stimuli and seeking new ways to relieve his sexual urges, in killing. It was very clear he was using pornography, and compulsively masturbated even at crime scenes and had a bondage fetish. His pornography usage probably played a very significant role in his life. It also most likely fueled his violent fantasies, especially

when it contained bondage. Using bondage during sex and his cross-dressing are also ways he would show his sexual issues. The photos the police found in Dennis's home of him in women's clothing and the mask would have proven the incompetency he experienced with sex. In order for him to perform, sex had to be highly visual and autoerotic, instead of interacting with willing partners. Obviously the only exception would be his ability to father children with his willing wife. However, my thoughts on that are that he was able to set aside his urges with his wife by fantasizing about dominating other women during his downtime. My opinion is that he compensated for the lack of violent sexual experiences with fantasies. This would give him ultimate control, which is obviously one of the most important aspects of serial killers' fantasies and sexual experiences.

It seems to me that during a majority of his life he had been raised by his grandparents more than his own parents. Based on his childhood memories that seemed to be important, his mother tended to be the dominant disciplinarian. This indicates that he did not really have a strong father figure. His grandfather seemed to be an important person in his life, but it does not feel like he strongly identified with him, which might be why most of his hatred was directed toward his mother. Also, he was with his grandfather when he first experienced sadistic arousal, which is what probably began his violent fantasies at an extremely young age.

It is very clear that Dennis is a sadistic person. He actively enjoyed watching his victims suffer and being able to control how they felt. When the victims felt pain, his feelings of control and aggression were reinforced. Based on previous research, I would consider Dennis to be neurotic. He tended to use aggression without really thinking about it and any type of slight provocation made him extremely aggressive. He did not necessarily mind when the women were trying to fight him off; he usually enjoyed the challenge because he knew what the ending was

going to be. He was also much more hostile than the normal person. Most people who display aggression tend to increase their aggression because of a lack of discipline or discipline that is unfair, hostile, inconsistent and abusive. However, Dennis and his siblings had reported that his mother always disciplined them. Granted, it may have borderline abusive, but he also enjoyed that based on his masochistic tendencies. Therefore, I do not believe the discipline was a real cause of his increase in aggression. He definitely displays aggression caused by hostility, though. I would consider him to be a disturbed child who acts out on his sadistic impulses. He was extremely resistant to change throughout his entire life and I don't think there would really have been anything someone could have done to prevent these crimes. He displayed cruelty as an adolescent as well as openly disobeying his mother on numerous occasions. His aggression was probably strengthened by a repeated observation of an event by a family member whom he identified strongly with, either his mother or grandfather. After seeing these events, he was able to mentally relive those events and incorporate them into his fantasies.

His mother was, by far, the dominant parent throughout his childhood and adolescence. As I previously stated, dominant mothers tend to have more of an impact on their lives. However, he also had a poor emotional relationship with her, which is most likely why he attacked other women.

Dennis would definitely qualify as the geographically stable killer. He lived in the area he killed in, even murdering the woman who lived down the street. He was actively employed within his community and was quite well known. His peers respected him for the most part, except for the people who thought he was too domineering at work. His motive was invisible and unknown to the public, which is obviously why it took the police so long to figure out who the

killer was. To him, his motive was very sexual and he killed a select group of people, although he did go outside of his group a few times.

Dennis fits many different types of killers, which makes it difficult to categorize him. He is kind of a visionary because he claims to have been impelled to kill someone because a voice told him to. He had told the police that a demon he had named "Batter" was present for all of his killings. He also fits some of the characteristics of the mission-oriented killer. He's geographically stable and extremely perverted with his means of thrill seeking. He also tends to kill for the pure enjoyment of it. His forms of sexual deviance took the form of bondage fetishes and cross-dressing. He also fits some characteristics of the power/control-oriented killer. He receives gratification from complete control of the victim. If he doesn't get the chance to exercise complete control, his aggression increases. His behavior also indicates a character disorder and not a break from reality. He was able to stop killing for long periods of time, which means he understood that what he was doing was punishable. He was able to exercise control over himself and keep himself from killing when he was busy with other parts of his life.

He demonstrates a few thoughts that would be considered disturbing, as well. His thinking patterns are unique. He actively daydreamed and continued to expand on his fantasies. He was also a compulsive masturbator, which is paramount to his sexual fantasies. The major external behavior that he demonstrated was rebelliousness. But, he also showed his community how highly he thought of himself and his own authority. This was shown when he euthanized other people's dogs instead of returning them.

Dennis also shows signs of being both organized and disorganized as a killer. He was organized in the sense that he is of good intelligence and he dedicated a lot of his time to his studies. He preferred skilled work and had the ability to hold a steady job throughout most of his

killings. He was also living with his wife throughout their entire marriage, which began before his first killing and continued all the way until he was arrested. He had the ability to be mobile and always had a working vehicle to get to crime scenes as well as away from. He was constantly following the murders in the news and actually pressed the media to continue making stories about him. On the other side, he was also somewhat disorganized. He was very socially immature and unable to make any real friends. He was mostly engrossed in his work and dedicated to his family. He experienced fairly harsh discipline during his childhood, mostly from his mother. It was also very obvious after he talked with the police that he was extremely anxious while committing his murders. He was always worried something bad was going to happen and that he was going to be caught. He refrained from drinking alcohol while he was killing, but had some instances where he would use drinking as a cover up to his wife so he could either hunt for new victims or so he could listen to the police talk at the bars. He also was living near the scene of the murders.

Dennis's *modus operandi* (MO) was usually raping and strangling his victims. This slowly changed over time but always included the strangling. He just had to improvise on certain victims because of unforeseen issues, like dogs or a husband on the way. The strangling was very practical and it reflected the main method in his fantasies.

His beginning kills were reasonably well planned out but the plans disintegrated pretty quickly once his plans were executed. His first kill fell apart very quickly when he realized the whole family was in the home instead of just Josie and her mother. This kill also created a very addictive feeling. He took pride in what he had done, so much so that he went ahead and wrote an entire story about what had taken place in the Otero home.

Most of his "triggers" were based on how the female he killed looked and presented herself. He liked the women who seemed to have taken care of themselves and their looks. His victims were never chosen completely at random. He meticulously hunted them and then, after settling on one, would stalk her and learn as much as he possibly could about her daily routines. He would usually just see the woman he wanted while he was out and about in public, but then figure out as much as he could about her. He would then study the location and factors that could potentially affect a getaway if he needed one.

The murders themselves had aspects of being both act focused and processed focused. The act focused comes from the fact that he became highly aroused while he was actually killing his victims. He had even left semen at least one of the crime scenes, which probably would have been more helpful to the police if DNA use had been more prevalent and if his DNA had been in a system. However, his murders were also processed focused in the sense that he used sadistic methods of torture, rape and murder. He enjoyed repeatedly strangling some of his victims before actually killing them. He also used a great deal of planning and details during the murders. He would sometimes stalk a victim for weeks and know every detail of her routine before making contact with her and attacking.

His actual crime scenes were mostly reflective of an organized killer. Each death was a highly planned murder and the victim was a stranger in the sense that he had never had real contact with her. He was able to control the conversations he had with his victims prior to killing them. The crime scene was also controlled overall. He controlled as many aspects as he possibly could. For example, where the murder took place and by tying her up would be two aspects. His victims were very submissive and didn't really fight back once they had been taken over, especially once they had been restrained. He was extremely aggressive in the actual killing.

Instead of just killing them quickly, he wanted to cause as much pain as possible. Even though he didn't start out by transporting the bodies of his victims, he slowly evolved into that. I would say that that was the last aspect of his becoming the organized killer. He started off with a slightly disorganized side because he would leave the body in view and he didn't care who found the body. He also began by leaving the bodies at the scene of the murder.

When looking at his feedback filter, he repeatedly looked at the errors of his murder so that he could do better next time. That is mostly why he would write down the story of how things happened so he could have future gratification as well as looking at what had gone wrong. He was also able to evaluate what made him more aroused and how he could achieve that in the future. He was also able to look at what he could do to gain more power and control for his next kill.

Dennis Rader definitely possesses many of the characteristics of lust killers, as well. First is that he usually kills by strangulation along with torturing them before finally killing them. He also enjoyed taking souvenirs from every victim. He had taken jewelry and given it to his wife. He took multiple pictures of his victims after he had killed them and kept them for subsequent gratification.

I would classify him as mostly an organized nonsocial lust killer with some disorganized asocial characteristics. As an organized nonsocial killer, he was an egocentric who generally disliked people, but was able to pose as a warm person for however long he needed to in order to gain their trust. He also had the ability to tell whom he needed to be warm towards and who didn't really matter in the grand scheme of things. He wanted to inflict pain on others for joy it gave him. He often committed murder in the victims' homes and then he would transfer some of the bodies to locations where they would later be found. He loved the excitement shown by the

public when the bodies were finally discovered and how the community reacted to the crimes. For the bodies he did transfer and dump, he would return to the dumping location to see whether or not the bodies had been found and to see how the investigation was going. He also enjoyed being a part of the investigation and seeing how far the police had gotten and how much they knew.

However, he did show a few aspects of being a disorganized asocial killer. He chose to murder in very close proximity to his home, even being so bold as to kill a woman just a few houses down the block. He seemed to be a quiet person who kept to himself for the most part unless he needed to be outgoing. He was involved in voyeurism as an adolescent, peeping on females in the bathrooms at school or in their windows at their homes. When he first started out with his killings, he would leave the bodies at the scene of the murder without trying to conceal them. As I mentioned earlier, he eventually evolved and began transporting the bodies, but still refused to conceal them.

When it comes to the Learning Theory, the hypothesis that early experience with humiliation could translate into vicious acts could be apparent with Dennis. The fact that his mother humiliated him when he was younger by catching him masturbating and then punishing him for it could really be that humiliation. When an authority figure interrupted what makes him aroused and happy, he turns that into embarrassment and anger. This could even have become a traumatic memory that was buried deep into his subconscious as the beginning of his anger towards women and his desire to dominate and control people. This could potentially have been an unaddressed trauma that damaged some of his thought processes that ultimately destroyed him.

Serial killers are probably among the most terrifying people. They are extremely different from us psychologically, but we have no way of knowing that upon meeting them. They have the ability to come off as social and warm people when, in all reality, they are hunting for their next victim. It is absolutely impossible to say why someone grows up to become a serial killer, just as it is impossible to say why someone grows up to be a charitable person who would give away everything to make someone else happy. We don't have the answers and we probably just never will know the complete truth. However, I hope I have given some sort of insight into the minds of these people and shown it could have been avoided, but maybe not. Maybe it is just so ingrained in their minds that they are unable to change their fate. Regardless, Dennis Rader targeted and killed so many women that it sent terror through Wichita, Kansas starting in 1974 and they were not released from this horror until 2005. If I had to make an educated guess as to why Dennis Rader became a serial killer, it would be that he was raised in a home where his thoughts and beliefs were discouraged. He was not allowed to be himself because he was different. If his sexual behaviors had been dealt with in a different manner, I feel like his becoming a serial murderer could have been avoided. However, as I previously stated, there is no way to know for sure. The mind of a serial killer is very complex, just like ours. I hope there is more research done on these individuals so that we could potentially have the ability to see the signs and prevent them from happening again.

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